



Jean Shepherd

The Hammond Parks and Recreation Department has been serving the Hammond community for more than 80 years. Today, the department manages over 1000 acres of public parks within the city. The department is proud to expand its service to the Hammond community with the Jean Shepherd Community Center. For more information on programming, pricing and the Family Access Plan contact the Center at 219.554.0155.



Mayor Duane W. Dedelow, Jr.

The Jean Shepherd Community Center is a testament to the synergy that occurs when local government and community work together to create a stronger foundation for the future.

Jean Shepherd Community Center



- Soccer • Health • Community Theater • Sledding • Arts & Crafts • Hockey • Tennis • Volleyball • Indoor Track • Walking • Running • Basketball



Hammond Parks and Recreation
•
Hammond Civic Center
5825 Sohl Avenue
Hammond, IN 46320
•
219-853-6378

Dowling Park,
3031 Mahoney Drive
Hammond, IN 46323
219.554.0155

A Center for Healthier Living

In the fine tradition of the Hammond Parks and Recreation Department, the Jean Shepherd Community Center was designed, developed and constructed to promote and support active, healthy lifestyles. The 41,000 sq. ft. facility features a 30,000 sq. ft. gymnasium/exhibition hall. In that space are:

- Two regulation-sized basketball courts
- Volleyball court
- A 1/10th of a mile indoor walking/running track
- Space which can be converted into an indoor soccer/hockey arena
- Exercise Programs

In addition, the Center has 8,000 sq. ft. of administration space that includes multi-purpose rooms. The Center is ideal for hosting a wide variety of community activities, including: arts and crafts, job fairs, health programs, seminars and community theater. A banquet facility provides seating for more than 100 and is available for rental.

Outdoor features in Dowling Park, home of the Community Center, include enhanced outdoor soccer fields, tennis courts, a cricket pitch and a sledding hill.

Woodland Child Development Center

Adjacent to the Jean Shepherd Community Center is a 17,000 sq. ft. day care facility operated by Woodland Child Development Center, Inc. The facility gives busy parents the opportunity to enroll their children, infant through 12 years old, and get a great workout at the Community Center, knowing the children are well cared for. For enrollment and registration information contact them directly at 219.844.3603.

A Community Center, A Community Effort

The Center is the result of an effort made by a group from the Federation of Interfaith Citizens Organizations. Their mission was to develop a Community Center that would provide local residents with a central location for healthy activities. The Interfaith group led by local resident Mike Koharchik took their plan to the Mayor Duane W. Dedelow, Jr. He asked them to put together a petition.



The Jean Shepherd Community Center

Two thousand signatures later, they had the community support they needed to get the project started. They surveyed residents for input on specific community needs and then met with an architect and the Hammond Park Board to design the Center to meet those needs. The Park Board and the City Council approved a \$2.7 million bond issue for the project. At the same time, the Parks & Recreation Department was developing a master plan for Dowling Park. They brought together other stakeholders from the park, including AAU Track organizers, soccer moms and dads and neighborhood people. Together with the Federation members, they proposed a series of improvements with the Community Center as a focal point.

The Jean Shepherd Community Center is a testament to the synergy occurring when local government and community work together to create a stronger foundation for the future.

Jean Shepherd: One of Hammond's Favorite Sons

An American original, Jean Shepherd was a writer, humorist, satirist, actor, radio raconteur, TV & film personality. A Hammond native, Shepherd is perhaps best known for his classic family film, *A Christmas Story*. He wrote, directed and narrated the film. He was also a best-selling author, storyteller extraordinaire and, most of all, a talk radio pioneer. Shepherd's on-the-air stories, in New York, about a fictional "Hohman, Indiana" blazed the trail for Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon stories. With bits and pieces of his youth in Hammond, Indiana he weaved tales of the joys, humor, intrigue and angst of growing up. Shepherd was also a finalist for replacing Steve Allen as host of *The Tonight Show*. The job instead went to Jack Paar.

Jean Shepherd grew up on Cleveland street in the Hessville neighborhood, a proud graduate of Warren Harding Elementary School and Hammond High School, Shepherd spent a lot of time in Dowling Park area. He received a "Lifetime Achievement" award from the city and an honorary doctorate from Purdue in 1995. Jean Shepherd passed away on October 16th, 1999. He was 78.

Center Home to a Hero

Park Board Commissioners included a long-time Shepherd fan who was instrumental in getting the community center named after his hero. While archival material of Jean Shepherd's voluminous body of work exists at Purdue Calumet and in the Calumet Room at the Hammond Public Library, there are plans for the Community Center to become a home for Shepherd's other work. The Center is a fitting tribute to one Hammond's most famous sons.